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PUNCH



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Don't just be careful — take EXTRA care

Issued as part of the Fire Offices' Committee campaign against fire wastage.

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The little things . . .



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Little Island
that would not yield
to savage might.
Immortal symbol
of all little things
which, having faith
and courage
and endurance
shall prevail
against the dark
destroying powers.
Little squadrons—
how little
once—
that charged
into big formations
and scattered them.
Little ships
that fought through
tempest of flame
and sea
to bring supplies.
Little homes
shattered ;
Humble folk
carrying on
in Malta . . .
as in Britain . . .
Island to Island . . .
calling . . .
' Carry on.'

This war is being fought for the rights of little things—the sacred right of little folk to live their lives unmolested by big gangsters. It is being won by millions of little sacrifices, little efforts—and millions doing their 'bit.' Our duty is to make our 'bit' bigger—which means, here and now, work harder and SAVE MORE.

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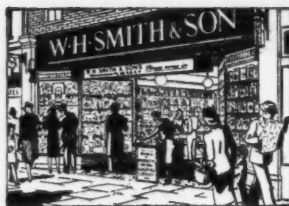
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truly enough, that time does some useful sorting out.

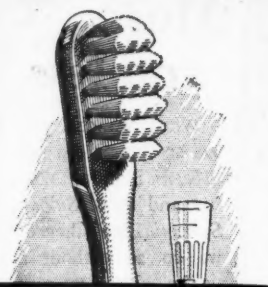
But for many others, to be among the new books is essential if they are to get the most out of their reading. To them books are news, with which they must be up to date.

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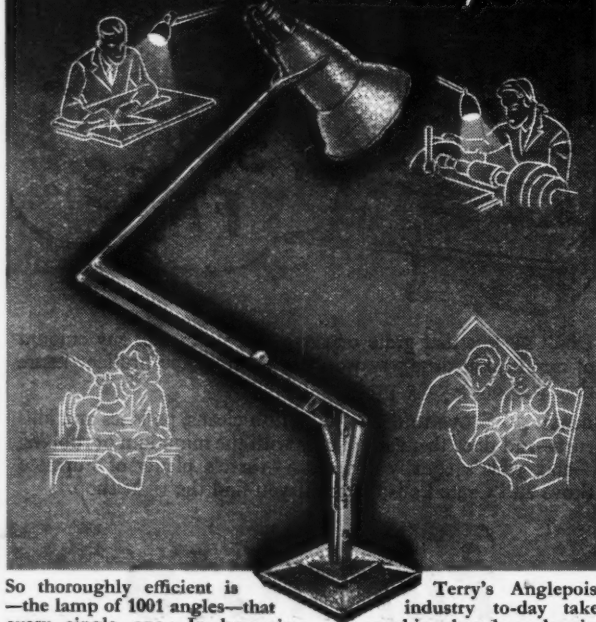
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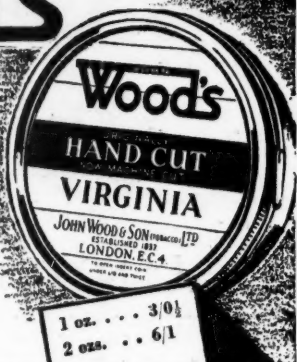
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Sole Manufacturers: Harding, Tilton and Hartley, Ltd., Taunton, Somerset.



Mr. Payle-Madder, whose sublimations on canvas are the *furor* of the advanced art world, has been delayed in the completion of his masterpiece "Regret." It was of a doorknob, two fingerstalls and a bottle of pickle. Fortunately (for us) the pickle was Pan Yan and when hunger broke in upon inspiration he consumed this portion of his model with an omelette of dried eggs. Which having finished, he was heard to murmur: "Regret be d....d!"

Pan Yan

Of course, Pan Yan is not so easy to get now, but Mr. Madder avers "Masterpieces are always rare."

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Housewives, whose time for home duties is curtailed by their activities in furthering the war effort, find Mansion Polish a real help in keeping the home bright, clean and healthy.



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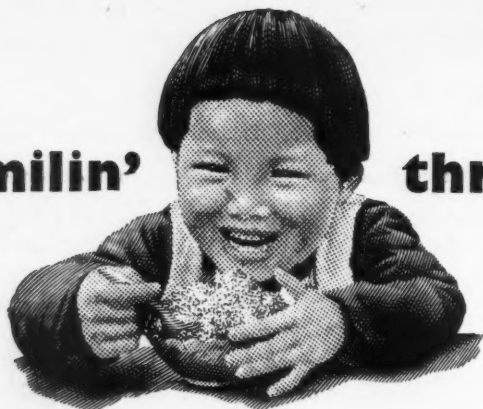
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UNDER COVER

FACTS and figures about the war effort of British Railways are quite rightly kept "under cover." There is small wisdom in giving gratuitous information to an inquisitive enemy.

But known facts plus a little imagination reveal a story of enormous industry and resourceful organisation.

The railways, apart from the domestic transport needs of the country, are called upon to haul a gigantic amount of additional traffic.

Imports from overseas, and exports for war zones are conveyed by rail. Work-people in ever-growing thousands are carried to and from factories, both old and new. Troops coming and troops going are transported by rail.

In face of these extra burdens, in face of increased difficulties in operation and the trying conditions of blackout, is there any wonder that facilities for domestic passenger travel have had to be substantially curtailed?

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RUNCY

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCIV No. 5332

April 28 1943

Charivaria

"THE modern girl learns to dance in no time," says a writer. She has to, with these modern bands.

A famous ballet-dancer has poisoned her heel. Most of them, of course, poise on their toes.

"If your letter for abroad is delayed it may be because you have omitted to put the name and address on the envelope," says a West Indian paper. It seems a sufficient reason.

A Rome broadcaster points out that Italian troops are helping Rommel in Africa and von Bock in Russia. It is feared in Tokyo that it may be Japan's turn next.



Mussolini speaks good German but rather slowly. He has, however, become a rapid listener in this language of late years.

"Solicitor requires suggestions for Post-war occupation, not necessarily legal; highest qualifications."—*Advt. in "The Times."* Or lowest?



A girls' school is taking a ballot on the question of whether the earth is round or flat. The earth agreeing to abide by the decision?

An American officer says that there is something poetic about a typical English countryside scene, with sheep and cattle browsing in green meadows. A sort of graze elegy.

Many people who gave up smoking after the 1942 Budget are now giving it up again.

"Farmer Chases Poultry Thieves," says a heading. They broke into a run.

A correspondent says that although he is dark, a bright red beard appeared when he gave up shaving owing to blade shortage. Just as well, perhaps. It must have been lurking in his system for years.

Bridge-players in America are protesting against a recent decision that bridge is a game of chance. Although they admit that a good deal depends on a good deal.

A Consoling Reflection

"If the Axis in Tunisia staged a Dunkirk, he said, the R.A.F. would be there, there."—*Star.*

"Some pupils are liable to become increasingly restless when climbing over several thousand feet in the dark," says a Wing-Commander. The same may be said of cinema patrons.



In Finland men's suits made chiefly of wood cost £25 and are very plain. No fancy wainscots.

There is a shortage of dwarfs in American circuses and fairs. The best dwarfs are like that.

A magistrate has remarked that a woman who marries a burglar is taking grave risks. Still they are usually very quiet about the house.

The "Statute of Europe"

(which is said to be Germany's latest device for staving off the offensive of the Allied Powers).

SHALL the Great King of Europe
Sitting on his golden throne
Give freedom to all nations
And to every man his own?

This is a well-known saying,
When the sinner's eyes are dull
And the fires are cold, and he is old
That he grows merciful.

With a contrite heart and gracious
In lands his hands made red
Having destroyed and plundered
He pardons now the dead.

He lifts the cup no longer
To the onrush of the year,
For the lees of the wine are bitter,
They bear the taste of fear.

He shall grant his royal mercy
On oath beside the graves
Of the men he slew, if still some few
Remain to be his slaves.

Too soon the king gives pardon
To the suppliants who come,
To the slaves who wait beside his gate,
His hour is not yet come.

He shall give his royal charter
To the lands beyond the seas
On the border-line of the River Rhine
And grant it on his knees. EVOE.

o o

Passion in Baker Street

AMONG the great love-stories of literature the whirlwind courtship of Dr. Watson takes high rank. It was on the afternoon of July 8, 1888—an unpleasant afternoon, as a matter of fact, with the yellow fog swirling down the street and drifting across the dun-coloured houses—that Miss Mary Morstan, of Lower Camberwell, stepped across the threshold of No. 221B. By the evening of the 11th Watson had declared his love and the thing was done. Less than eighty hours, and into that time the doctor had packed a murder, an all-night trudge on a groggy leg after a trail of cresote and that thrilling chase down the Thames after the *Aurora*. Not bad going for a half-pay surgeon.

What was it about Miss Mary Morstan that bowled the doctor over?

Fortunately we have his own account of her attractions. She was twenty-seven, blonde, small, dainty and well-gloved. "Her face had neither regularity of feature nor beauty of complexion" (a remark which Watson may, I think, have regretted sometimes in the sanctity of his own home), "but her expression was sweet and amiable, and her large blue eyes were singularly spiritual and sympathetic." Her hair was luxuriant, done according to the

fashion of the time in rich coils, and had the pleasing property of acquiring, in the light of a shaded lamp, a "dull metallic sparkle."

She dressed well. For afternoon wear she affected a simple dress of a sombre greyish-beige, untrimmed and unbraid, and her small turban with a suspicion of white feather at the side and those excellent gloves completed an ensemble "in the most perfect taste"; in the evenings, "some sort of white diaphanous material," says Watson with masculine vagueness, set off by a little touch of scarlet at the neck and waist. She had also, lucky girl, a dark cloak for travelling about in cabs.

Her voice was deep and rich—an unusual thing in a small fair girl. But it was the grave sweetness of her expression that Watson found irresistible. "In an experience of women," he says largely, "which extends over many nations and three separate continents, I have never looked upon a face which gave such a clear promise of a refined and sensitive nature." Not too refined and sensitive, one hopes, or she might have been inclined to dwell a little on that unfortunate word "experience." Watson seems to have felt he could get away with anything, provided he finished up with a pretty thumping compliment.

THE FIRST GLASS

Three stages are discernible in the swift course of the doctor's love-making.

He was attracted at once, and said so, after her first visit—said so, I mean, to Holmes, who hadn't observed it. To Miss Morstan his only recorded utterances on this occasion were: "You will, I am sure, excuse me," and "I shall be proud and happy, if I can be of any service," neither of them tantamount to a declaration, though the latter does reveal a decided advance in warmth over the former.

When she had gone "dangerous thoughts" came into his head, the old rascal.

Later that evening the two of them went, it will be recalled, to see Mr. Thaddeus Sholto, in the purlieu of Coldharbour Lane, with Holmes to chaperon them. Watson was entertaining, though a little muddled, about Afghanistan in the cab, and most attentive the whole evening. When Miss Morstan turned deadly white at the short account of her father's death and looked as if she were going to faint, it was Watson who noticed her distress, Watson who quietly poured out a glass of water for her from a Venetian carafe upon the side-table. And later that same night, when they stood together among the rubbish-heaps at Pondicherry Lodge ("I have seen something of the sort," said Watson, "on the side of a hill near Ballarat"), it was his hand that sought and found hers in the hour of trouble.

Watson himself expresses a good deal of surprise at finding himself hand-in-hand with a pretty woman only a few hours after their first meeting; but, after all, what could be more natural? She was charming and in distress, he—well, what girl whose life has been spent in the sequestered surroundings first of a comfortable boarding establishment in Edinburgh, then as governess to Mrs. Cecil Forrester in Lower Camberwell, could fail to be impressed by a man who talked with such airy familiarity of Afghanistan and Ballarat? Moreover, it was dark, and one knows what Army doctors are.

IN THE CAB

It was quite late when Watson escorted Miss Morstan home in the police cab. Though nothing happened it must have been a memorable journey. Miss Morstan, who had been the soul of pluck up to this moment, first turned faint



COAXING KING COLE

"Come on down the mine, Daddy. This is our Second Front."



"I'm putting some smelts in on Tuesday."

and then burst into a storm of weeping. And Watson could do nothing. Honour and delicacy alike forbade him to comfort her with words of affection and love. He could not even offer, as his medical knowledge must have suggested, another glass of water. There were no Venetian carafes in cabs in those days. So he sealed his lips and did nothing. But both of them, I think, knew.

THE SECOND GLASS

Next day, July 9th, the doctor called on "Mrs Cecil Forrester," of Lower Camberwell—and got a dry grin from Holmes for his trouble. He also got a bright glance, he tells us, from Mary. This was encouragement enough, and on the evening of the 10th he was over there again. Mrs. Forrester, one suspects, must have begun to wonder.

She didn't have to wonder for long. It was lateish on the 11th of July that Watson, accompanied by a police inspector, took the empty treasure-chest round and had the luck to find Mrs. Forrester out. The inspector stayed in the cab, and that was that.

Watson described his adventures, including, thoughtless fellow, his narrow escape from death. Miss Morstan turned white as usual—if she had a fault, that girl, it was a tendency

to be about to faint—and Watson, not caught at a disadvantage this time, poured her out a glass of water. Well, naturally, she couldn't resist that. . . .

There were no children, so far as one knows, of this marriage.
H. F. E.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID:

NEVER in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

That famous and well-deserved tribute to the prowess and devotion of British airmen serves as a fitting reminder of the debt we owe to them. We can never repay them for all they have done and are doing for us, but through the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND we are able to meet some of their needs. Will you please help us in the good work by sending a contribution? Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

I Am Sent Up To Spin.

ONCE again I am sitting, all alone, in my little aeroplane.

This time I have been instructed by the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet to take it quite high and to spin it deliberately to earth—or nearly to earth.

But only nearly. I shall most certainly see to it that this is so.

I am not, I may say, regarding the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet with my usual respectful benevolence. That he should suggest that I take up my aeroplane and so savagely misuse the controls as to cause it to descend to earth in a series of alarming spirals is, in my opinion, inconsiderate indeed. Furthermore he has chosen to add insult to injury. He has actually indicated that portion of the atmosphere which he desires me to use for this terrifying purpose, and has intimated that he himself will be standing on the tarmac witnessing my manœuvres.

I consider this distrustful.

It is not difficult, even for me, to deduce his motive for this piece of astute planning. He fears, I am sure, that I might seek the refuge of some heavy cloud, remain there for the allotted time and then descend to earth to report that his instructions have been carried out.

The implication of course is monstrous.

There is no heavy cloud.

Here, then, am I reluctantly forcing my aeroplane to a height to which it is not normally accustomed.

I am not climbing very fast.

I have fully made up my mind to attain an altitude of at least four thousand feet before I execute the manœuvre which I am anticipating with such trepidation, and because I am already experiencing a certain difficulty in breathing I have a feeling that a height in excess of this figure has already been reached.

With growing apprehension I consult the altimeter.

Surely enough the time has arrived. Indeed, I observe that I am now exactly four thousand two hundred and fifty feet above the planet on which I was born.

I cannot in all conscience waste further time by climbing my aeroplane any higher.

It is, moreover, with some concern that I realize the reason why my respiratory system is giving undue trouble. It is on no account of excess

altitude, but rather excess anxiety. The agony may still, however, be delayed yet a few moments more.

It is of the utmost importance that I should ascertain without the remotest shadow of doubt whether or no any other aeroplane is using that piece of sky immediately beneath me. On this point I have received especial instructions.

I will, in consequence, circle this portion of the troposphere as slowly and carefully as reason will allow. I feel sure that I shall later be congratulated on my thorough precaution. . . .

Ah! Is it not a good thing I decided to spend a few more precious moments in ascertaining that all is clear? Is not that an aeroplane I see beneath me?

True, it appears to be approximately three miles off and flying in the opposite direction, but I have no desire to be considered in any way a pupil who would take unnecessary chances. . . .

I feel that the moment cannot now be put off any longer. The gentleman in the beautiful black helmet is, I imagine, already gazing at me from the safety of the tarmac with a certain idle curiosity.

My left hand, which I notice is trembling as if with emotion, closes the throttle and thus silences my engine. The awful stillness is like a prelude to some imminent disaster. My nerveless fingers ease the control column gently back towards my stomach, so that that vague indeterminate line which I have come to know as the horizon fades from my view.

Something is happening to my aeroplane that leads me to suppose it is on the point of stall. Those peculiar wires between the wings whose purpose I have always been mystified to understand are flapping rudely, so that some latent instinct tells me that my feet should now be taking action.

I have, I realize with increasing terror, entirely failed to make up my mind as to the actual direction of spin—a feature solely governed by the foot which I decide to press forward. Under the circumstances of previous indecision I had better perhaps use that foot which I feel is controlled by the stronger leg.

Both, I am sorry to say, are at the moment uncommonly weak.

I seem to recall, however, that nature has endowed me with a sturdier right one. It is that one, therefore, that I shall use. . . .

The moment of real agony has now indeed arrived. Oh, woe is me!

I am gazing in stupefaction at a clump of trees which has every appearance of making violent impact with the nose of my aeroplane at any moment. I am certain that I have descended far below my specified altitude and that I am undone.

A recovery from this awful motion must be effected with all speed.

Which foot did I previously press forward?

Is not my head in such a whirl that I cannot determine the direction of rotation of the earth beneath me? The gentleman in the beautiful black helmet must, at this moment, be on his knees in despair, tears of remorse staining his pallid cheeks at the thought that he should have so cruelly sent me to my doom.

But lo! The earth is no longer rushing up to meet me. Moreover I am aware that the horizon is no longer lost to view. The nose of my aeroplane is, indeed, pointing at it with peculiar determination.

But what is this? Four thousand feet, does my altimeter tell me? The suggestion is of course ludicrous. The instrument must assuredly have been rendered unserviceable by the violent evolutions it has just been forced to undergo.

Yet the fields beneath me still seem to be a considerable distance off.

I think I shall return to earth.

My descent will be slow and careful, as I see by my watch that I have still much time in hand. . . .

Here, then, am I once more upon the aerodrome, taxiing with moderate skill to a place of rest and safety.

I observe that the gentleman in the beautiful black helmet is making his way rather more rapidly than usual towards me. How kind of him to be so concerned for my safe return! How considerate he is to be so eager to offer his condolences for my close venture with death! . . .

But what is that he is saying? I am straightway to ascend again? Now? Without delay? Am I not even to be allowed a moment in which to recover my failing strength?

I am to go up and spin, he says—not do a slow spiral of one turn through fifty feet.

How base! How mean!

I, personally, have been brought up to regard sarcasm as the very lowest form of wit. . . .

At the Pictures

"TALES OF MANHATTAN"
(WARNER AND REGAL)

THE connecting link between the five episodes in this ingenious and delightful film is a tail-coat which, having been cursed by its fitter, goes out into the world bearing with it, as it passes from hand to hand, misfortunes that in the end turn out to be blessings in disguise. It begins its adventures with CHARLES BOYER, for whom it has, of course, been made, since no curse could be potent enough to put BOYER into a second-hand coat. The immaculate BOYER is surprised by a jealous husband (THOMAS MITCHELL) with his wife (RITA HAYWORTH). In the ensuing scene, brilliantly played by both the men, BOYER, debonair and resourceful throughout, discovers that the woman he loves is cold, venal and treacherous, though one looks in vain for any glint of these base qualities in RITA HAYWORTH's large and anxious eyes.

Discarded by BOYER, the tail-coat, which has been perforated by a bullet, descends in the social scale, plays a subordinate part in an episode enriched by the versatile talent of GINGER ROGERS, and then, in the finest of the five episodes, helps a poor musician of genius to a strange triumph. Impressed by a composition of *Charles Smith's* (CHARLES LAUGHTON), *Arturo Bellini*, the great conductor, arranges for him to conduct his hitherto unplayed masterpiece. *Mrs. Smith* fishes the tail-coat out of a second-hand dealer's wardrobe, and *Smith* puts it on for the great night. It is a tight squeeze, and as with mounting excitement he conducts his music the tail-coat gives under the arms. That a concert audience would go into uncontrollable laughter at such a harrowing spectacle seems unlikely, but one welcomes an improbability which gives CHARLES LAUGHTON such scope for his own peculiar genius. The climax—*Arturo Bellini* standing up in his box and taking off his own tail-coat, the male part of the audience following suit, and a late-comer, after a moment of profound perplexity, conforming with the others—is one of those



[Tales of Manhattan]

OPENING OUT

Charles Smith . . . CHARLES LAUGHTON

effects, impossible on the stage, which should warm the most tepid enthusiast for the films.

The tail-coat passes to EDWARD G. ROBINSON, who, even after LAUGHTON

and in a much inferior episode, is moving as the down-and-out transformed at the eleventh hour into an up-and-in. But in spite of PAUL ROBESON, the final episode does not quite come off, except for a last glimpse of the tail-coat, scaring crows for an old negro.

"KEEPER OF THE FLAME"
(EMPIRE)

COMPARED with the ordinary anti-Fascist film created by the democratic zeal of Hollywood, *Keeper of the Flame* is a masterpiece of depth and subtlety, and even without this favouring comparison it produces an original effect. As the would-be Hitler is dead before the film starts, we are spared the usual paraphernalia of underground Fifth Column activity. When the film opens *Robert Forrest* has just been killed, a bridge across which he was riding having collapsed in a storm. All America is ringing with his greatness as a selfless public man, an embryo Abraham Lincoln. Newspaper men besiege his house, and one of them, *Steven O'Malley* (SPENCER TRACY), gets through to his widow (KATHARINE HEPBURN). *Steve* is one of those haters of tyranny who, as American correspondents, ranged the Continent while Hitler was building up his power. He has worshipped *Forrest* from far off, and now wishes, with the assistance of

his widow, to tell his story to the world. The reluctance of *Mrs. Forrest* to help him, her apparent affection for a handsome cousin, her somewhat enigmatic praise of her husband ("The crowds loved him") and her dismay when *Steve* discovers and gets into talk with *Forrest's* mother arouse *Steve's* suspicions. At last the truth comes out. *Mrs. Forrest* had discovered that her husband was building up a Fascist organization, and to save the man she once loved and the great democracy to which she belonged, had let him ride to his death. The gradual transference of the spectator's sympathy from the dead man to the widow could not have been managed more skilfully, but it is a pity that the producer has succumbed to the new fashion of deepening an already sombre theme with bursts of funereal music.

H. K.



[Keeper of the Flame]

THIS MUSIC, TOO!

Steven O'Malley SPENCER TRACY
Mrs. Forrest KATHARINE HEPBURN

The Phoney Phleet

XVI—H.M.S. "Mal-de-Mer"

THERE was, you may recall, a time
When gin was difficult to get and lime
Was unobtainable. This meant
That Syme's cash was chiefly spent
On drinks like lemonade or soup.
No wonder he went off his loop
And was, well, not entirely *there*;
This may account for *Mal-de-Mer*—
A ship which, so his critics swore,
Came near to losing us the war.

It seems one evening in his pub—
You know the place; the Gadget's Club—
He dined with Surgeon-Captain Spleen,
An old carbuncle who had seen
A lot of service under Blake,
Or Hood. This antique stomach-ache,
Well laced no doubt with ginger-ale,
Pitched Syme a most alarming tale
About sea-sickness in the Fleet.
He showed him an enormous sheet
Covered with hieroglyphics, and
As far as Syme could understand
This ailment was a major curse.
It seemed that sea-sickness, or worse,
Afflicts some 99·4
Per cent. of naval men, or more.
There wasn't any need to stress
The time-loss, the unhappiness,
The waste of food and energy
This brought about. And one could see
That should our Navy be surprised
When thus almost immobilized
The worst might happen.

Syme rushed home
And soon that ginger-beer-filled dome
Reacting to this latest scare
Produced H.M.S. *Mal-de-Mer*.

This highly optimistic craft
Was slung in gimbals fore and aft
Which hinged on universal joints.
I may have muddled up these points
But all you really need to know
Is that the ship was mounted so
That in a thoroughly dry dock
She could be made to pitch and rock,
To roll, toss, list, heave, yaw, sway, heel
Much worse than if the show were real.
They had the other trimmings there—
Green oily smells and lack of air
And cooking as it's done at sea—
All laid on to the *n*th degree.
Syme claimed that sailors who had been
Through this ingenious machine
Couldn't be sick again.

The time
Came when "Commander (E) George Syme"
Invited the "18th Sea Lord
With other members of the Board"
To join the party that he'd fling
For *Mal-de-Mer's* commissioning.
Only too glad to get away
From their departments for the day,

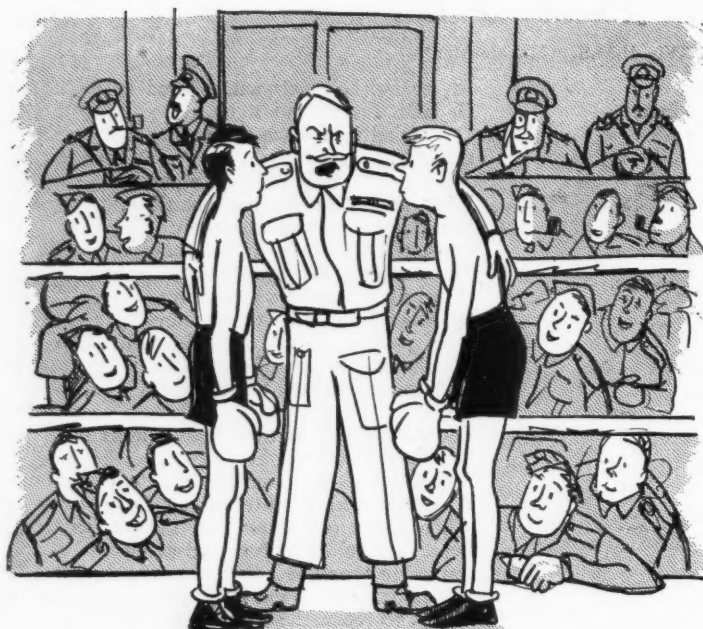
An avalanche, a stream, a flood
Of H.M. Navy's bluest blood
Descended in a blaze of brass
On Wigan.

How it came to pass,
What gremlin, poltergeist, banshee,
What ill-complexioned agency
Conspired to sabotage that show
The world—and Syme—will never know.
When forty admirals and scores
Of lesser types, like commodores,
Were packed aboard, and friend G. Syme
Was having a triumphant time,
Some moron started up the works.

The first three hundred beastly jerks
Eliminated thirty-eight
Assorted high-ups, and their state
Was pitiful; they clutched the decks
While heavy colleagues trod their necks
Beneath them as they rushed about
Imploping Syme to let them out.
A little later sixty more
Trying to reach the ward-room door
Were trampled down by fifty-eight
Who'd had the same idea too late.
The thing became a shambles and
Above the moans for "Land, sweet Land"
From those who hadn't passed right out
Arose a swelling raucous shout
Which sounded much like "Death to Syme!"
George until now had spent his time
Divided equally between
Efforts to stop the damn machine
And what he thought were tactful quips
To admirals with bloodless lips,
Inverted eye-balls and grey-green
Complexions; but both tasks had been
Completely futureless. The shouts
Of "Death to Syme!" resolved all doubts
Concerning whether he should stay
Or make a whirlwind getaway.
He leapt ashore and caught a train
And didn't pass that way again.

How did it end? A commodore
Established contact with the shore
By making signals of distress
And sending out an S.O.S.
A breeches-buoy was rigged and then
Those gibbering and broken men
Were rescued from the ersatz sea
In order of seniority.

And Syme? How was he killed? Hanged? Shot?
Stoned? Burnt alive? No, he was not.
He never heard a single word
Because (this may not have occurred
To some of you) if they had brought
The matter up before a Court
Each brass-hat would have had to shout
Full details of his symptoms out
Telling the world how he was ill.
And that's why Syme is with us still.



William Seelman

"Five rounds rapid."

Toller Reports.

To O.C. "B" Sqn

HEREWITH report of damage to civilian property by my Troop during Exercise Anvil. I regret this report was not submitted before. Immediately following the Exercise I was attached to Div Battle School, after detailing the writing of the report to Sgt Pinhoe, and it was not until my return and the receipt of your memo that I was aware that Sgt Pinhoe had failed to submit the report owing to the envelope on which were noted details of addresses and damage having been sent to the laundry in the pocket of my shirt. I have now found these details and submit them as follows.

1. Damage to the greenhouse and ground-floor rooms at "The Willows," West Rockinge, owned by Mr. Hammer-ton (or Hamperton), on the night 3 Feb 1943, was caused by the necessity of finding shelter for my Troop. The Troop had had no sleep or shelter for two days and nights during which time they had been engaging the enemy in heavy rain and were consequently wet

through. Owing to the capture of the ration-truck they were also without rations.

Permission was kindly granted by the owner for the Troop to sleep in the greenhouse, and after giving orders that the greatest care was to be taken of this property I proceeded to report to Sqn HQ. I returned to find that permission had also apparently been granted for the Troop to occupy one downstairs room. I did not verify this because the occupants of the house had returned to bed and I did not wish to disturb them. After giving further orders that no damage should be done to furniture etc. I myself went to sleep.

We were attacked by the enemy at approx 0300 hrs. In the subsequent confusion a number of panes of glass were broken in the greenhouse owing to the troops sleeping there being uncertain of the position of the door, and the torch on charge to Cpl Bean failing. This incident has already been examined at the Court of Inquiry into

the injuries to Tprs Hall and Short sustained from broken glass.

Owing to the fact that no umpire was available, it was decided to continue the action by turning the house into a strong point, and in doing this further rooms on the ground floor were occupied. At the same time, strict orders were given that the upstairs portion of the house was not to be entered, in order not to disturb the occupants. The fact that Tprs Jones and Allison attempted to establish a Bren gun post in the window of a bedroom occupied by the aunt of Mr. Hamperton was due to a misunderstanding. Damage that occurred during the subsequent action, when a superior force of enemy entered the house and a room-to-room action was fought according to the principles laid down in the "Street Fighting" lecture given to the Sqn the previous week, might not have been so serious had not I myself been rendered temporarily unconscious and thus unable to halt the engagement before it became out of hand.

During the withdrawal operation carried out shortly afterwards, it was not possible, owing to both the Troop torches being out of action and the electric light in the house having fused, to make a list of property damaged as a result of the action. It should however be borne in mind that when the Troop withdrew the enemy occupied the house, and some damage may have been caused while they were in occupation. It has been subsequently admitted to me that seven cold sausages, found on a plate in the kitchen when that room was made Troop HQ towards the end of the engagement, were consumed by the Wireless Operator, and this fact also explains the distorted speech and difficulty of communication complained of by Sqn HQ at the height of the action when information was needed.

2. Damage to the garden, well and garage at "Haven Cot," Peacewell Road, Little Britton, was caused between 0400 hrs and 0700 hrs on the same night as the Troop attempted to harbour vehicles on these premises. Owing to the soft and muddy state of the ground and the darkness of the night, three vehicles became bogged in the flower-beds and on the lawn, while an armoured car was accidentally parked on the wooden cover of a well which subsequently gave way. Damage to the garage was caused when one vehicle, which was bogged near by, came forward unexpectedly during efforts to move it. Wood and bricks obtained in this way from the garage were used to help in the extrication of

other vehicles, as were a number of bundles of wood-faggots found in the garden. Apart from digging necessitated on the lawn and vehicle-tracks made over the garden, the only further damage was to a set of tea-cups and jug kindly sent out from the house at 0700 hrs which were accidentally upset and three cups broken through being placed on a jacked-up vehicle which subsequently slipped off the jack. I did not note the name of the occupant of the house as he said the damage was unimportant and anyway the property would shortly be demolished entirely to make room for an aerodrome.

3. A wood hatchet, mistakenly borrowed from Rectory Farm, 419623, has now been returned.

(Signed) J. TOLLER, Lt.
Home Forces.

Lest We Forget

"YOU remember a woman called Lottie Pinker, who stayed here once?"

"I can't say I do."

"Yes, yes, you do. She had brown hair and wore rather raffia kind of hats. Laura remembers her, don't you, Laura?"

"Perfectly. She had a face rather like a sort of piece of cold apple-pie."

"As a matter of fact, she had. And a brother out in New Zealand."

"I still don't remember. What did she do?"

"Well, more or less everything and nothing. She was inclined to be flat-footed, and I think she had a lot to do with eurhythmics. Or did she produce pageants?"

"No, it wasn't pageants. More like miming, and yet that wasn't it either. Anyhow, Charles really ought to remember her, considering that she stayed in the house."

"Charles, you *must* remember. She was exactly like every other woman of that kind. She had a brother in New Zealand, and talked about Angora rabbits."

"Don't you mean sheep?"

"No. Why should I?"

"The brother in New Zealand."

"Oh, he had nothing to do with the Angora rabbits."

"That's what I mean. He must have been sheep, not rabbits."

"I don't think so. He was a bank-manager in Auckland."

"Oh. Well, I still don't remember Dottie."

"Lottie, Charles. Though I don't think we ever got as far as that. She stayed Miss Pinker."

"Well, it mayn't be too late even now. There are always a great many extra marriages whenever there's a war."

"I mean, she was Miss Pinker to us—not Lottie. That's one reason why you ought to remember her, I think, because Laura pointed out that she had rather pink eyes."

"Yes, she had. Or anyway *one* rather pink eye. Surely, Charles, you remember her now?"

"A pink-eyed woman with a brother in New Zealand who runs Angora rabbits and who's inclined to be flat-footed and produce pageants? I suppose you don't mean that cousin of yours, Lois Something, who played the double-bass?"

"Certainly not. Why should I?"

"I just thought it sounded a bit like her."

"Not in the very least."

"Honestly, Charles, I don't see how you can have forgotten Lottie Pinker as thoroughly as all that. She was always wanting to turn on the wireless and then not listening."

"So do you and Laura. And your cousin Lois."

"Well, let's not start about that now. I *do* wish you'd try to remember Lottie Pinker. She was here quite a week and it seemed much longer."

"When was she here?"

"It was late winter, I think."

"No, it was early spring. I remember because we went out for a walk and it was that kind of a walk."

"She walked rather like a cow."

"Yes, that's right."

"Charles, you do remember her now, don't you?"

"No. I might, if you could only tell me something about her, but she sounds exactly like everybody else."

"That's just what she was."

"And anyway, why do you want me to remember her? Is she coming here again?"

"Oh, no. Definitely not. I thought I saw that she'd died in the paper, but as a matter of fact it turned out to be somebody else, with the same kind of name. So that made me ask if you remembered her."

"Well, I still don't. And what's more, I don't want to."

"Charles, how *extraordinary* you are!"

E. M. D.

An Englishman's Pleasure

"In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 76 of the Madras Public Health Act, 1939 (Madras Act III of 1939), His Excellency the Governor of Madras is hereby pleased to declare that the City of Madras is visited by an outbreak of cholera."

The Fort St. George Gazette.



"... and in any case, no smoking!"



"I'll give you Paratroops!"

Bus-Drivers

A BUS-DRIVER to me once,
I am ashamed to say,
was just a man who shouted at me
on the rare occasions
when I drove my car through London;
and, though the things he shouted
were not as rude as the things the taxi-drivers shouted,
he had the advantage of shouting them
from a greater height.

In the winter of 1940
his criticism
(which I overheard as a grateful passenger)
was even more devastating;
this time of men who were not below him
but several thousand feet over his head.
It was not their *driving* he complained of,
but their habit of dropping things.

Nox omnibus noctibus nigrior densiorque.
"Night blacker and thicker than all nights,"
if I may, with acknowledgment, quote
the translation of Smith III
in Middle Vb.

Such, according to the Younger Pliny,
was the darkness before the great eruption of Vesuvius,
and such is now our nightly darkness

in the season of winter,
with, for the bus-driver, the added menace
of legs striding into his dimmed headlights
and torches on the pavements,
now spluttering morse-like,
now blinding without thought.

If I controlled the bureau of post-war planning,
I should set up a special section and charge it with the
task

of creating a world fit for bus-drivers to drive in,
a world of days without glare
and nights without darkness;
and, as a reward for all their skill and patience
in this war-time black-out,

I should
every now and then
(though not, of course, *too* often)
allow every bus-driver who felt like it
to disregard the ridiculous queues of people at the bus-stops
and, instead of stopping,
to drive
and drive
and drive
until he got to the sea
or the mountains
or, at least, ran out of petrol.



MACDUFF AT THE GATE

"... I hear a knocking
At the south entry..."—*Macbeth: Act. II., Sc. 2.*



"My wife! She's given birth to triplicates!"

Ben Bonathan Meets a Duke.

"WELL, Ben, I hear you've been to London?"

"That's right, sir. I went for an interview like—along o' the Mystery of Agriculture."

"And how did London seem to you?"

"Seemed purty ordinary tu me, sir. I begun thinkin' I never shudn't ought tu 'ave went. They'm in a bad way up tu Lunnon, for zartin."

"What d'you mean—bomb-damage and that sort of thing?"

"No—'twasn't that azackly, sir. I see'd bomb-'oles big as they tu Plymouth. 'Twuz they old inns—they wasn't no manner o' use."

"How was that, Ben?"

"Why, they 'adn't no room for no one, they wuz that full up wi' folk—nor they 'adn't no liquor neither!"

"You surprise me! I'm afraid your visit to London wasn't exactly a success."

"Well—no, 'twouldn't 'ave been reely—only I 'appened tu be the jest o' the Dook o' Washington."

"The guest of the Duke of—what?"

"Washington—summat like that, sir. Yu see, it 'appened like this yere. 'Twuz just black-out when the old train got tu Paddington, so I takes me bag tu that gurt 'otel on the station an' I asks if they got a room for me."

"Name an' address?" says the maid at the Deception counter."

"Ben Bonathan from Tovey Tavy," I tells 'er.

"Ave yu booked, Mr. Bonathan?" 'er asks.

"No," I says, 'I never 'ad no time tu book.'

"Sorry—but there idden' no more rooms, Mr. Bonathan," 'er says.

"So I takes me old bag an' begins walkin' thru Lunnon, an' presently I see'd a little light wi' 'Bar' wrote up in blue. So in I goes, an' there wuz a chap servin'."

"Pint o' rough, please," I says.

"Rough what?" 'e asks.

"Why, cider, o' course!" I tells 'im.

"Doan't yu know what rough cider is?"

"Doan't keep no cider yere," 'e says, so out I goes again.

"Yu'll bleeve me or not, sir, but I walked a couple o' mile thru they streets, an' there wasn't a pint o' rough in that 'ole gurt city. Oh, they'm in a proper bad way up tu Lunnon—worse 'it by the war than what we are tu Tovey Tavy for zartin. No cider! Oh, my days, tu think o' that now! Nor they 'adn't got no rooms neither. They wuz all filled right up with Americans. Not a bed nowhere in all Lunnon—an' not a drop o' rough cider!"

"So presently I see'd a gurt 'ouse wi' broad steps, an' over the top wuz a light shinin' on the Stars an' Stripes. An' while I wuz lookin' a couple o' chaps come down they steps. All vitty they wuz, wi' bits o' brass up an' down their yewman-forms."

"I beg pardon," I says, 'but do your Ambassador or summat stop yere?'"

"No," says one of 'em, 'not yere,' e says. 'Is there anything I can do for yu?'"

"Well," I says, 'I'm Ben Bonathan,' I says, 'from Tovey Tavy in Demshur."

Your lot 'ave took every room in the 'ole of Lunnon, so there idden' a bed for me nowhere.'

"I'm real sorry tu 'ear that, Mr. Bonathan,' 'e says, lookin' round at the other chap, 'o' wuz smilin' friendly like. 'We'll 'ave tu see what can be done about ut. Allow me tu present yu tu the Dook o' Washington!'

"'E wuz a quiet-seemin' chap, this Dook, an' 'e looked back at the other one like as if 'e 'adn't wanted 'im tu tell 'is tittle tu a stranger. But 'e turns tu me, an' 'e says: 'Mr. Bonathan,' 'e says, 'if yu will accompany us tu my sweet it is possible we may find accommodation for yu.'

"'Course I rackoned 'e wuz meanin' tu present me tu the Dookess, an' I asked if I cud make meself vitty avore'and, but 'e said 'Er Grace wuz still tu Washington, so us all got in a taxi an' drove down long.

"Oh, my dear sawl, it wuz a fine room the Dook give me! A gurt bed an' a telephone, an' a bathroom tu, all tu meself like!

"'Avore yu retire,' says the Dook, 'my secketary will order yu some refreshments.' The secketary looks quick at the Dook, an' the Dook laughs friendly-like at 'is secketary.

"Now, Mr. Bonathan,' says the Dook, 'yu make yourself cormfrable an' tell us all about your 'ome in Demshur.'

"So there I sat in a gurt chair, drinkin' stuff I never tasted the like of, an' 'eatin' sangwidges full o' summat black an' shiny—little knobs they wuz. An' I tells 'em all about Tovey Tavy, an' the farm, an' they land-girls rinnin' after the old parachute-silk, an' Tom Chaffe's cow a-eatin' of ut, an' doctor takin' Clara Bragg's temperature for twenty minutes tu stop 'er tongue, an' Parson tellin' Flood's Dairy 'e didn't want the milk for christenin', an' the interview at the Mystery of Agriculture, an' I doan't know what all!

"An' the Dook an' 'is secketary, they laughed till all hours, an' I doan't remember much more after that, but avore I goes off next mornin' the Dook 'e shakes me by the 'and an' says: 'Mr. Bonathan,' 'e says, 'I'm sorry yu bin inconvenienced by my countrymen, but not sorry yu was able tu come yere. Yu made us feel like we wuz back 'ome again!'

"Thank you, Your Grace,' I says. 'I rackon yu made me real cormfrable. Yu'm proper 'orspitable,' I says.

"Ah,' says the Dook, 'we'm proud of our 'orspitality in the States, yu know. An' I rackon that's along o' some on us 'avin' come from Demshur!'

J'y suis . . .

"I T's fifty year come Mertimas," Said Mrs. Broon, "since I cam here,

And here I'll bide wi' John's wee lass;

I'm no gaun oot, ye needna fear.

The walls is guid, the roof is no, There's whaur the incindery cam inbye,

But if it's wat I'll pit ablow

A pat to keep the druggert dry;

Na, na! Wee Tib an' me an' pussy's

No gaun doon to thae Cooncil hooses.

They wouldna stand a blast like yon!

The walls wad crumble but an' ben,

A wheen auld bricks wi' harlin' on Is nae fit bield for beas' or men.

I'd be obleedged if ye wad ask

Auld Tam the slater to come ower,"

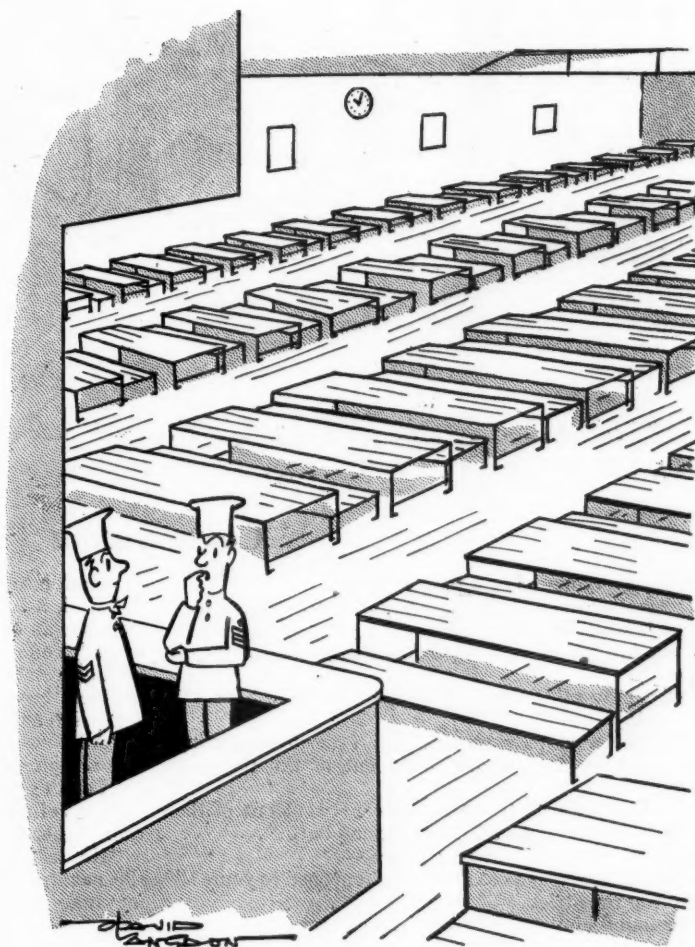
Said she and set the tea to mask;

An' so we left her to her dower,

Proud o' the hoose o' which she's mistress,

Wi' a' its bonny aspidistries.

J. B. N.



"Now what on earth shall we give them for lunch to-day?"



Silliness

"You see, dear, we were asked to burn less coal this year so that the poor miners wouldn't have to dig up so much."

Conversation

"I SAY, everyone. Let's play a——"

"Isn't it extraordinary how you always find someone who'll say that?"

"Thank heaven there's a pencil shortage and a paper shortage."

"Well, I only said it because people say it."

"Yesterday I——"

"Well, we could play something. I mean something intelligent where no one has to go out of the room or anything."

"I was once at a party where someone went out of the room and they forgot to tell him to come back."

"Everyone's been to a party where——"

"Or known someone who has. What happened to yours?"

"Like the rope-trick."

"They found him in the larder. It was ages ago."

"Listen. I know an awfully intelligent game."

"Darling, what were you going to say about yesterday you?"

"Oh, that. It's out of date now."

"Isn't he a honey?"

"How intelligent?"

"Well, it isn't really. You say a sentence, you see, like, well, like anything, and then the next person says 'because' and adds on another sentence. I mean something happened because something happened. Then the next person says another 'because' and——"

"It's terrible."

"All I was going to say was yesterday in the train I saw a man with literally crimson hair."

"I don't get it. 'Because' and adds on another sentence."

"Lots of people have crimson hair. Though it must have been rather fun."

"No, listen. The cat sat on the mat, as it were. Well, the next person says the cat sat on the mat because the mat was——"

"All right, all right. We'll say no more about it."

"But he had, I tell you. Well, scarlet."

"But it is awfully good, really. You see, after about fifty because you challenge the last person suddenly——"

"It's terrible."

"What I mean, darling, is that people say people have

scarlet hair when really by ordinary standards they mean sort of brown."

"I suppose you pay a forfeit."

"Don't be sophisticated."

"And then you have to go backwards to the beginning, saying 'therefore' instead of 'because.' It's a test of memory, you see."

"No doubt."

"People do have scarlet hair. I knew a girl at school."

"No, but they *don't*. That's just the point. Everyone talks about red hair, and what do we mean?"

"Answer her that."

"Oh, well. A man was standing on Westminster Bridge."

"I expect you're colour-blind. Lots of men are."

"Oh, well, I suppose I must. Because he was a New Zealander."

"Don't be literary."

"There's someone at the front door."

"There isn't. It always sounds like that."

"Macaulay."

"I know."

"Of course he's not colour-blind."

"All right, I'm thinking. Because. Because he came from New Zealand."

"Because he thought he would like to travel. This was before the war, and he bought a cake or something wrapped in some travel literature."

"Still, I don't see how anyone can know they're colour-blind if it's only slightly."

"Before the war it would have been a proper paper bag."

"Because he was hungry."

"Of course I can. That's blue and that's green. No, blue."

"Because he hadn't had anything to eat all day."

"Aquamarine. No, turquoise. I mean *eau-de-nil*."

"They're all blue."

"They still do wrap cakes up."

"Well, whatever you say I bet if you give a man a piece of stuff to match in a shop he never can."

"Because. Wait. I must get a good one."

"Oh, *darling*, you can't. You know the time I gave you the reel of sewing-silk."

"Guess what I heard someone saying to someone in a shop yesterday."

"No, I don't."

"It was in 1938. You must remember."

"She said, 'I think the black-out's so trying, don't you?' And what do you think the other woman said?"

"Yes, isn't it? And batteries."

"No, nearly."

"Because. Oh, well. Because he hadn't got any money."

"That was brilliant."

"Because he had left all his money in his other suit."

"Well, actually she said 'Yes, and it doesn't get any better.'"

"Oh, very nice."

"A letter-box is scarlet. Well, vermilion."

"I once saw a man reading *The Daisy Chain* in a dining-car."

"I read *The Daisy Chain* once."

"I read *The Mysteries of Udolpho* once at school. I bet no one else ever read *The Mysteries of Udolpho*."

"I still bet no one else ever saw a man with scarlet hair."

"Because. Because. Wait. I must get a good one."

"Aw, shucks. Nobody really wants to."

"Thank heaven. Let's talk."

"Yes. What I think is, one thing about everything now is that people are so much better at conversation than they were. I mean, they're sort of better at it now, aren't they?"

Office Stooges

IF in the humble darkness of our minds ideas are lurking,
It is neither meet nor proper to bring them to light;
For we are the people who come in on Saturday morning,
We are the people who wait for the telephone to click off at night.

Let us not try to be clever. The country could not stand it.
There are enough wizards already having lunch till three;
And we are the people who check ledgers and run errands,
We are the people who buy paper-clips and brew those nice cups of tea.

If we feel we would dabble in matters of high policy
Let us remember there are dozens clustering on the ropes.
Not for us the strategy planned on the 4.10 to Hitchin;
We are the people who do the black-out and stick stamps on envelopes.

Though there is nothing hid from us, though we have all knowledge,

The war cannot be won if we insist on being bright;
For who could they find to come in on a Saturday morning?
Who could they find to wait for that damned telephone to click off at night?
V. G.



"I notice yours are nothing to write home about either, Sir."

At the Revivals

"ABRAHAM LINCOLN" (PLAYHOUSE)
"SHOW BOAT" (STOLL)

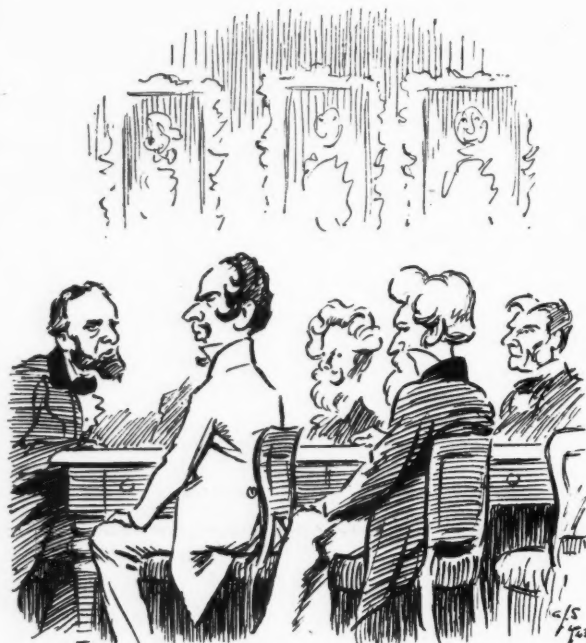
ONE of the Old Vic's companies, as if weary of wandering, has now settled at the Playhouse with a revival of JOHN DRINKWATER'S *Abraham Lincoln*, which will stay there for as long as the public wants to see it. The revival will be followed by a new play, now popular in Moscow—C. SIMENOV'S *The Russians*; and this in turn will be followed by *On With the Motley*, a new work by Mr. PETER USTINOV, our youngest and brightest hope, who might, all the same, be persuaded to devise a less hackneyed title for his play before it is, as Peter Quince would say, "preferred."

Let no one take *Abraham Lincoln* for a mere resuscitation. It is burning and alive, produced with serious care and several inspired flashes, and well acted in all its more important parts. Mr. HERBERT LOMAS's distinguished central performance everywhere reminds us that Lincoln among the new order of world-values stands out a greater man than ever—a man who never once deviated from his high set purpose, who carried simplicity to the height of majesty, who passionately hated war yet carried through the bitterly distasteful fight against slavery unflinchingly to a noble end. This, let it be repeated, is a fine play, and the portrait which playwright and actor give is recognizably that same gaunt sad man and lofty spirit whom Whitman so movingly mourned. Old Walt caught the likeness, too, in his less well-known *Specimen Days*: "I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression." At his assassination Walt is moved to write: "The tragic splendor of his death, purging, illuminating all, throws round his form, his head, an aureole that will remain and grow brighter through time, while history lives and love of country lasts." But just as telling in its very much simpler way is the

remark of the old soldier to Whitman himself in the hospital, a veteran who had known Lincoln personally: "The war is over, and many are lost. And now we have lost the best, the fairest, the truest man in America. Take him altogether, he was the best man this country ever produced. It was quite a while I thought very different; but some time before the murder, that's the way I have seen it." Whitman's single comment is similarly impressive: "There was deep earnestness in the soldier."

The Old Vic producer, Mr. TYRONE

poignancy. Mr. GUTHRIE ought to know, all the same, that not even a good actor like Mr. JAMES HARCOURT can present a "Poor Old Joe" like *Frederick Douglass* wholly successfully. The remedy is simple: you cast an old negro actor, almost any old negro. When a white actor blackens his face and puts on a grey wig you are conscious of nothing except the wigginess of that wig and the time it must take to remove the black afterwards. We thought so when we saw *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the age of nine; we think so still.



BAD EGG IN CABINET PUDDING

Abraham Lincoln Mr. HERBERT LOMAS
Burnt Hook Mr. FREDERIC HORREY

GUTHRIE, has had the good sense to shed those lengthy verse-chronicles with which the six scenes of this play used to be yawningly divided, and to order a production almost as unelaborate as the character of the great President himself. The men are spare, almost seedy in their garb; the women in their gayer crinolines are almost gaudy in comparison. We have never seen the excellent episode between Lincoln and the two wives, the foolish and the sad, better played (Miss KATHLEEN BOUTALL and Miss FELICITY LYSER). Nor has the scene with the young soldier condemned to die (Mr. DOUGLAS CAMPBELL) ever before had quite so piercing a

The direct advantage of employing coloured people to play coloured people is seen in the elaborate revival of *Show Boat*, where a dozen young darkie dandies cluster round Mr. FLOTSAM'S *Joe* and harmonize "O! Man River" some eight or nine times in the course of the piece, and hardly once too often. Mr. FLOTSAM sings profoundly well in Mr. Paul Robeson's old part, but is profoundly wrong to attach so much importance and attention to a microphone stuck in the middle of the footlights. This applies to everybody on the Stoll stage. The further away anybody is from that offending Object, the more we like the sound of his or her voice. Miss PAT TAYLOR, for example, very sensibly stands out of the Object's range when delivering one of Mr. JEROME KERN's best songs, the ditty called "Bill." Bill, it seems, had no kind of virtue, asset, attribute, or charm; he was nothing to make a song about. Then why make a song about him? Mr. KERN and Miss TAYLOR between them cover up the reason with engaging ingenuity.

The show has at least five other good tunes (or three more than most musical plays), and a not-too-tiresome love-story (Mr. BRUCE CARFAX and Miss GWYNETH LASCELLES). But our favourite moment remains that in which *Joe* suddenly and for no clear reason utters Shakespeare's line, "The shadowed livery of the burnish'd sun." At this point the author of *Show Boat*, Mr. OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN II, quoting an even greater dramatist out of the blue, as it were, always gives us an indefinable pleasure. A. D.

The Masterpiece of Creation League

"MAN," I said, "is the masterpiece of Creation, the acknowledged leader of all the animal world, the sole possessor of reason, and heir of the ages."

I had not meant to be pompous or even trite, but I had been persuaded to try a rather fine drink of which we had a few bottles at the club, some special vintage of Tokay, and for a moment I felt like that and blurted it out before I could stop myself. And a member on the other side of the table leaned forward and said, "Your words interest me. I wonder if I could persuade you to join our League. We have a League for promoting that very thing. It is only a guinea a year."

Had he not spoken I think I should have seen immediately that my remark had been too often made before by others for it to be worth repeating, even if it was certainly true. But the interest he took in my remark prevented my seeing that. Still, I was slightly puzzled.

"What very thing?" I asked.

"To make sure that man is what you have so aptly described him. Where possible we educate, so as to make sure of this."

"What kind of education?" I asked.

"Wherever man seems falling a little behind," he explained, "we educate, as widely as possible, so as to help him to catch up at that point. For instance, take the ostrich, an extremely cunning bird that, in spite of his great size, is able to hide himself in a moment. That's easy enough with a rabbit, but with an animal the size of an ostrich it takes brains to do it, especially in open country. We all know what he does; but we are too silly to understand the reason for it. Now that's where we educate, so as to help the intelligence of mankind to catch up with that of the ostrich. Of course we might have understood it a thousand years ago, when that excellent description of yours was first used; but most of us have lived so much in towns since that time that our observation is not what it was, and we need to be re-educated; that is, if we are to keep up with the ostrich. You see, in a land that is rather less than one per cent. bushes and a bit more than ninety-nine per cent. desert, which is where the ostrich lives, he is a pretty conspicuous object, with his large body and his long thin neck; but when he puts his head down underneath there's no way of telling him from the bushes, unless you get very close. I don't say it is

extremely intelligent of him; all I say is that he is more intelligent than man, because man is so little able to understand what the bird is doing that he merely habitually laughs at him, as all ignorant people do at anything they can't understand. Now I want mankind to understand that, and so to get level with the ostrich; and in the course of years, as we all hope, to surpass him, so that what you just said will be as true as—well, as it deserves to be. What I mean is, that you expressed it extremely well, and I should like to see it true.

"Then there's the horse, that shies at whatever surprises it, even the simplest things. We think he is merely a fool. But the horse knows perfectly well that you have got to get started before whatever it is that is after you springs, and that there is no time to wonder

whether it is a snow-leopard or a newspaper; because, if it was a snow-leopard . . ."

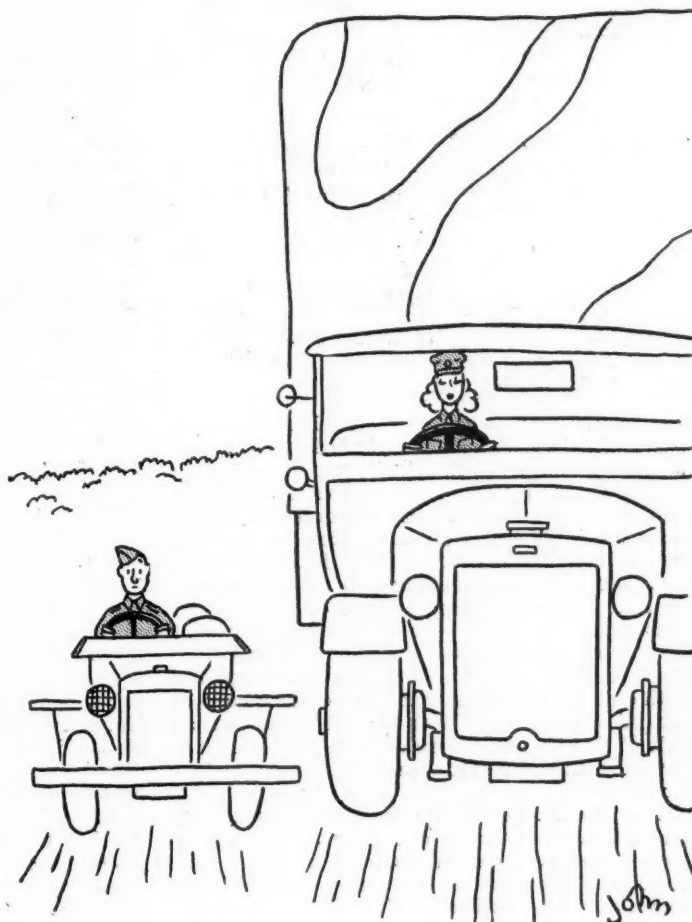
Unfortunately at this moment another member butted in with a story about a motor-car, so that I never learned all that there is to learn of the lore that is wiser than man's. And, from the story of the motor-car, the conversation drifted away, so that I never even joined the League, and so I never got taught enough quite to justify my remark; not that it really matters, as I probably shan't be saying it any more. The remark was trite, anyway.

ANON.

"PACIFIC AIR NEEDS DISPUTE"

Daily Telegraph.

Tired of being pacific?





"As soon as I say 'The train now standing at Platform 4 is the 5.15 for Upshott, Chislemere, and so on,' YOU come in with your background of train noises, etc.—Okay?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Turgenev

TURGENEV was prouder of the share his *Annals of a Sportsman* had in the emancipation of the serfs by Alexander II than of his genius as a writer. "My one desire for my tomb," he said, "is that they shall engrave upon it what my book has accomplished for the liberation of serfs." This desire was in tune with the admiration he expressed for Don Quixote as contrasted with Hamlet, whose melancholy scepticism mirrored his own passive attitude to life. A biographer, however, should concern himself with what a man was, not with what he thinks he would have liked to be. *The Annals of a Sportsman* reflected the liberalizing sentiment of Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century, and was therefore one of the influences which helped to emancipate the serfs, but it was not, as Mr. J. A. T. LLOYD tries to make it in *Ivan Turgenev* (ROBERT HALE, 12/6), the pivot round which the life of its author revolved.

As pictured by Mr. LLOYD, Turgenev in Paris is hardly distinguishable from Lenin in Zurich or Geneva—"Turgenev, the apparent deserter, was in his own fashion a Slav Prometheus. . . . His heart was never more in Russia than when he was traversing the boulevards of Paris." Turgenev

was a poet, not a social reformer, and his themes were Russian because his most impressionable years had been spent there, but he was more at home in the settled civilizations of Western Europe than in his own country, and spent most of his maturity in Germany and France.

Unsatisfactory though Mr. LLOYD's book is as a whole, there is much of incidental interest in it—Turgenev's unhappy childhood with a violent tyrannical mother and a self-centred callous father, his poignant first experience of love, his period of youthful talk in Moscow, the atmosphere of which is caught in "What, we do not know yet if God exists, and you wish to dine!", and his uncomfortable relations with Dostoevsky and Tolstoi. Whatever the reason, Turgenev had a peculiarly unsettling effect on those two apostles of love, Dostoevsky lampooning him in a novel, after borrowing money from him, and Tolstoi twice challenging him to a duel. With Tolstoi he eventually became reconciled, and visited him at Yasnaya Polyana, where he amused a children's party with an imitation of the Parisian can-can dance, but did not much exhilarate his host, who noted in his journal—"Tougenef, can-can: it is sad. Meeting peasants on the road was joyful." Н. К.

Manners Makyth Man.

If one goes on making the right moral choices one becomes good. And it is a satisfactory thought that the choices, which we can control, matter more than the results, which we cannot.

". . . the Light of Lights
Looks always on the motive, not the deed,
The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone."

So Yeats; and so Mr. C. S. LEWIS in *Christian Behaviour* (BLES, 2/6). These sound and vivacious broadcasts, considerably amplified—the unpopular theme of "Christian Marriage" receiving a brilliant new chapter—take Christianity for granted. We need a fixed star to steer by before we can govern ourselves or plot a course for the state. Mr. LEWIS's reasons for accepting Christianity have been broadcast before, and he is too honest to pretend that the majority of his listeners are Christians. Better to admit the contrary and demand, for example, a Christian and binding marriage for Christians and a state contract for the rest. No one, however, is going to get away with the notion that Christians are not good citizens. The boot here is on the other leg. "Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in'; aim at earth and you will get neither." H. P. E.

Islam Surveyed

The two editors of *Islam To-day* (FABER, 12/6) are Dr. A. J. ARBERRY, who has written a number of books on Islamic culture, and Mr. ROM LANDAU, who has given the world a number of intimate sketches on outstanding figures in Arabia, Palestine, Egypt and elsewhere. These two have engaged to assist them a number of well-known and well-equipped contributors. The Moslem world has to-day an immense range, stretching from Morocco in the west to Malaya in the east, and this book sets out to show the careless Christian what this vast empire means to the modern world. The Muslims represent a homogeneous unity denied to most of the other great religions. It was Marshal Lyautey who compared the Islam world to a resonant box in which the faintest sound in one corner reverberates through the whole, and the source of this remarkable homogeneity is their faith, and the language of

the Koran. Thus the editors' preamble, before they set to work on their book. Part One deals with the Arab countries, stretching from Aden and Arabia through Syria and Egypt to Northern Africa, while the second half is concerned with the non-Arab countries—Persia, Afghanistan, India and Malaysia. To English readers this is perhaps the more interesting section, though India, the home of nearly ninety-five million Muslims, the largest number living in any one country in the world, is hardly treated as fully as its importance warrants. Afghanistan, handled by Sir PERCY SYKES, receives twenty pages as against India's thirteen. In the Arabian section the most important contributions are those on Palestine and Transjordan by Sir ARTHUR WAUCHOPE, on Iraq by Miss FREYA STARK, and on East Africa by Mr. WILLIAM HICHENS. There are sixteen illustrations, and a map at the end of the book which shows at a glance the predominance of Islam over much of Africa and Asia. L. W.

East Anglian Domesday

East Anglia, largely given to fishing, farming and fowling, with no towns to speak of and a robust, not to say churlish climate, is the home of straightforward men and women. Mr. J. WENTWORTH DAY, inspired by reading *Rural Rides* during a serious illness, set off on his horse Robert to see what his farming friends there were up to and hear their opinion of planning. Much of the opinion was, one gathers, unprintable; but enough remains among more exhilarating matter to render *Farming Adventure* (HARRAP, 10/6) an illuminating as well as a delightful book. It is odd to meet English stalwarts with halters round their necks like the Burghers of Calais—halters woven by the export trade. Reprieved, and allowed to live their own lives, they might extend the reign of honest work and personal responsibility even beyond Lincolnshire levels, Cambridgeshire orchards, Norfolk wheatfields and Essex saltings. The efforts they are making to feed us now owe little in their guest's estimation, or their own, to "titty little bits on motor-bikes" or importunate chemists. "Men and Muck" is the motto. Mr. DAY is perhaps inclined to overrate the results of the Enclosures; but every class of rural owner will find him a valiant and appreciative champion. H. P. E.

Humour as Humor

There is little doubt that the braveness of the new world that we are to fashion after the war will depend to some extent on how perfectly we of the Allied Nations understand each other by then. Therefore, since to like the same jokes is one of the true bonds of union between individuals or nations, it is all to the good that Mr. MORRIS BISHOP has edited a fat inviting volume called *A Treasury of British Humor* (COWARD MCCANN, New York, \$3.00). It is quite right as the book is meant for an American public that "humor" in the title of it should be spelt like that, but there has been no Americanizing of the contents, and a notable collection the author has pinned down to his more than eight hundred pages. He goes back to Chaucer and Prior and, coming to our day, includes, amongst other present contributors to *Punch*, Peter Fleming and Jan Struther. He picks out a good extract from Hardy, but Thackeray's prose proved difficult, while Trollope defeated him by refusing to yield anything humorous as a mere quotation. Of course, as with all anthologies, both the inclusions and the exclusions seem extraordinary, though the former are almost all in fact well justified. It is a very entertaining collection and the Editor's Notes are not the least entertaining part of it. B. E. S.

Night Life

"I barged into the Crew room and thought of the one and only time I had ever been into a parrot-house. Never have I seen such a crowd of people all in such high spirits at the same time." So Squadron-Leader LEONARD CHESHIRE, D.S.O., D.F.C., describes the beginning of his first night-flight over Germany. His book *Bomber Pilot* (HUTCHINSON, 6/-) will startle those who do not believe that old heads can grow on young shoulders, for it is a story not only of battle, sudden death, successful night-operation and amazing escape, but of the concentrated hard work that goes to make flying subconscious. He describes how he blindfolded himself and moved round the aeroplane until he could lay hands on everything, learned the job of each member of the crew and the idiosyncrasies of engines. He gives us his first experience of flak—"I felt a surge in my heart. The engines sounded defiant, as though they were saying: 'We are the top, this is what we were built for . . . This is our life, give us more.' I found I was thinking more clearly." We are not spared the grimness, but are allowed to share the lighter moments too—interludes with girls, and dancing and bathing. Once when he was dressing on the beach a little girl came up and said she would like to clear his socks from sand because: "You're doing something for me: I would like to do something for you." One is tempted to go on quoting, because to praise the spirit that inspired this book seems an impertinence. Perhaps the most amazing thing in it is the acceptance of death as an ordinary occurrence. The last lines seem to be coming true: "They [the organizers] have proved beyond any shadow of doubt that given the time the bomber can win the war." B. E. B.



"My batman gives me sixpence a day to save himself the trouble. . . ."



"I dreamt last night we were all being asked to join a Shortage-of-the-Month Club."

The Champion Swallowers

MAJOR Elmer P. Buttle, from Walla Walla, Wash., was pained to learn that his hosts, the Officers' Mess of the Flintshire Footguards, did not accept all his statements on the meteorology of the United States. Stories of hailstones as big as tennis-balls, winds that blew 200 m.p.h. at the top of Mount Washington in New Hampshire, blizzards that could blow feet of snow through a tiny keyhole in a single night—these were interesting facts to him but interesting fibs to his audience.

The whole trouble was that they were thoroughly prepared for Yankee tall tales and a certain amount of kidding. Even if they hadn't been prepared they would still have disbelieved him, but they would never have let him know it. As it was, the

more he told the truth the harder they laughed.

"But doggone it," said Major Buttle, "everything I've told you guys is the straight goods. Weather is my hobby and I happen to know what I'm saying. If I was a Canadian and told you about Canada, maybe you'd believe me."

"Oh, the Canadians are as bad as you are," said Major Tabbs. "We had one here who told us he came from a place called Atlin where he's seen it seventy-five degrees below zero. It was probably a little colder, he said, but his thermometer didn't register below seventy-five."

"Well?"

"Well, everyone knows British Columbia has a mild climate."

"Parts of it have," said Major Buttle. "It all depends. It's got about

everything in the way of climate. The coast is mild. But parts of the coast are so darn rainy you can't keep dry. There's a place called Henderson Lake on Vancouver Island where they get about three hundred inches of rain a year."

"Oh, come, come, Major Buttle! It only rains like that in the tropics."

"Well, I'm through," said Major Buttle, and decided to devote the rest of the evening to lying. If the truth was no good here, there was always something to use in its place. "But what beats me is the way you strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

"What do you mean?"

"It strikes me that any guy who can accept your own British climate as normal should be able to swallow anything, no matter how doggone true it is."

Stop Me If You've Heard It. . . .

"HULLO, Gus, old boy! Oh, thanks, don't mind if I do; mine's half a can! I say, have you heard the latest? Stop me if you have. There was a fellow once . . . What do you mean, am I sure it is the latest? Why, it was only told me the other day! You'll love it. There was a fellow who . . . Oh, cheerio, old man, all the best! Well, there was a fellow—stop me if you've heard it—who used . . . Here, Jackie, old man, come and join us? Heard this one? You'll love it. There was . . . I know, I know, Jackie, of course you can't tell whether you've heard it till I tell it. But how the hell can I tell it if you keep interrupting? Well, there was a . . . Here, I'll stop, Gus, while you buy him his beer. . . . Well, there was a fellow once about a couple of years ago . . . Cheerio, Jackie, here's fun! About a couple of years ago, when Sanger's Circus, or one of those circuses—stop me if you've heard it—was being sold up. Well, this fellow always used to visit the circus a lot, and the night before the sale he had a couple and got all sentimental and decided he'd go to the sale. . . . How do you mean, Gus, it can't be the latest story if it happened two years ago? The sale happened two years ago, but this is a story, see! And one that I was only told a day or so ago. Stop me if you've heard it, only for heaven's sake don't interrupt! Well, he decided, being a bit on, to go to the sale and buy one of the animals as a memento. So next morning this fellow went along and they started to auction the elephants. Well, naturally he thought, 'Dammit, I can't buy an elephant. Too big to put anywhere. I'd better . . .' Hullo, Bobbie, how are you? Haven't seen you for ages. Just telling a story. Come and listen, you'll love it. Chap going to the auction of Sanger's Circus, thinks he'll buy an animal as a memento. Have you heard it? Stop me if you have. No? Well, the elephants are put up first, but he thinks he'd better wait till something smaller . . . Sure you haven't heard it? Good! After a while up come the lions and tigers. But just as he . . . look, do buy your drink quickly, Bobbie, old man, and listen. . . . Oh, well, I don't mind if I do . . . Half-can, please. . . . Well, just as he's going to bid he thinks, after all, tigers are pretty fierce things to have around . . . What is it, Gus? I don't seem to be having much luck with this story. . . . Well, I don't care

whether you or Bobbie buys this round, only do listen to the story, it's darn good. . . . So he lets the tigers go, and then up come performing dogs and so on, and he's going to bid for one of these when he thinks it's a bit of a nuisance having a dog performing all over the house and . . . oh, don't be a damn fool, Jackie, you know what I mean . . . and so the sale goes on and at last . . . chin-chin, Bobbie, old man, mud in your eye! . . . and at last nearly everything's gone and he hasn't got anything. . . . Quite sure you haven't heard it, say so if you have. . . . Well, the fellow thinks, after all, I said I'd buy something and I'm damn well not going back home without something. Well, by this time. . . . Are you listening to this, Gus, old man? I'm trying to tell this story. . . . Oh, I see, thanks, the same again for me. . . . By this time, there's nothing left to sell but an old grey parrot. . . . What? Oh, here's fun, goodealth! So he starts bidding for this. . . . Why, blow me, if it isn't old Harry? Come and join the party, Harry! You'll love this. Fellow trying to buy a parrot at Sanger's auction sale. Stop me if you've heard it. . . . He's determined to buy something and this is all that's left. So he goes on bidding and bidding, absolutely determined to get it, and the price goes right away up to forty quid before it's at last knocked down to him. So when he goes up . . . Here, wait a bit! It's on me this time. You paid last . . . Oh, only Charlie's? I see! . . . So he goes up to the clerk at the settling-up desk and says . . . Cheerio, Charlie . . . says, 'That's a lot to pay for a parrot. I hope it can talk?' Sure you haven't heard it, you fellows? Stop me if you have. . . . And the clerk says, 'Talk! Why, blimey, guv'nor, 'e's bin bidding against yer 'arf the afternoon!' . . . Ha! ha! ha! Damn good, isn't it? 'Bidding against yer,' says the clerk. When he'd asked if the parrot could talk. And as it was the last thing left and he'd sworn to get something, he went on bidding right up to forty quid. 'That's a lot to pay for a parrot,' he said, 'I hope it can talk?' And the clerk said, 'Talk! Why, blimey, guv'nor, 'e's bin bidding against yer 'arf the afternoon!' . . . No, no, Bobbie, it's definitely my round now.

What'll you have? . . . Yours, Charlie? Gus, what's yours? Jackie, what are you having? . . . Heard another good one the other day . . . You'll love it. . . . Stop me if you've heard it. . . . Well, there was once a man. . . . A. A.

Secret Weapon No. 8

PEOPLE I meet at home often seem to think of the authorities as cobwebby old gentlemen who love to dispose of new ideas which might alleviate the sailor's lot, or win the war before next football season by pigeon-holing the papers and showing inventors the door.

But you soon find out that one of the most exciting things about modern war at sea is the regular arrival of new secret weapons. So we find in the armed yacht.

From the operational point of view we have two main classes of secret weapon:

(a) Secret weapons that arrive with an instructor or instructions.

(b) Secret weapons that arrive without instructor or instructions.

Class (a) seem generally to be the more effective—and, it must be admitted, the most numerous—but Class (b) the most exciting.

One day, a long time ago (things are different now), a green-striped specialist came aboard and said "Let's see, you're *Epergne II*, aren't you? (Thanks, lime for me.) You're to have B.O.D. fitted. (When! old boy—when!) They'll probably be shifting you to-morrow. (Here's cheers, old boy!)"

"What's B.O.D., old boy?"

"Haven't the least idea, old boy. Believe it's some sort of anti-dive-bomber device. Frightfully hush-hush, of course, so not a word to the wife."

It was a long time ago, so I think I am safe in revealing that the first thing that came aboard was a sort of big steel bin. Then came a lot of sand—all, it seemed, components of "Apparatus, B.O.D., Canister Discharging, P.S.B. Mark II." But better not ask what B.O.D. stands for. We never did.

Later a lorry brought down an object, and according to the issue note this was "Apparatus, B.O.D., Projectile, live. M.R.U. Detonator, etc., etc." Stencilled on the object was "Not to be stowed 'tween decks." The C.O. said as we inspected it

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

gloomily, "I'll stow it in fifty fathoms of water if I get the chance."

When we sailed routeing orders had: "Opportunity should be taken to test Apparatus, B.O.D., while at sea, care being taken that the test is made well out of sight of land. A short report should be rendered in due course..."

Well, we tested and we tested and we tested, and nothing happened.

But here that ingenious Whale Island man, A.B. Armstrong, took a hand. He was found one day with Projectile, B.O.D., half stripped down—he and the Seaman Torpedoman, as happy as schoolboys with a grandfather clock all to themselves. The Seaman Torpedoman, with a faraway look in his eyes, was speculating whether the detonator should be screwed out, or merely withdrawn.

I was hurriedly sent for by the Chief Boatswain's Mate, but Armstrong treated my concern with amusement and, to do him justice, proceeded to give a very good account of how B.O.D. worked. He and the S.T. (he said) were thinking of putting in a claim on the Torpedo Improvement Fund for a Substantial Modification to Existing Apparatus. I got quite interested myself, but unfortunately let slip something about it to the C.O., who

pronounced "Anyone who touches that beastly thing before we get back to base will be absolutely and magisterially canned by me, personally."

Armstrong, seeing wealth and fame snatched from him, grumbled plaintively but obeyed.

But when we got in we found we were due for an inspection. Commissioned Gunner Finnigan first brought this shattering news, and added "Fitted with B.O.D., aren't you? His Lordship is very interested in B.O.D.—partly invented the thing himself, I believe."

What were we to do? "Well," said the C.O. "at least he'll be able to tell us what B.O.D. stands for. Perhaps we can shoo him away from the beastly thing by making everything go wrong at Action Stations, or something."

His Lordship hopped aboard and said "I'm not going to bother you much to-day *Epergne*," and went straight for the secret weapon. And there, of course, was Armstrong, with the badgeman's perfect instinct for window-dressing, putting a spot of oil on the works. Direct disobedience to orders. The C.O. looked daggers at me.

Soon his Lordship and Armstrong were hard at it, while the unhappy C.O. had to try to pretend he'd encouraged Armstrong in his researches.

"Most interesting. Most interesting," said his Lordship.

"And now I want to test the remote control arrangement. Everything set to safe, Mr. Finnigan?"

"Everything set to safe, Chief Ordnance Artificer?" asked Mr. Finnigan. "Everything set to safe, Torpedo Gunner's Mate?" asked Chief Ordnance Artificer MacGorr. "Everything set to safe." "Everything safe, sir."

Down went the push.

There was a very loud bang and Projectile, B.O.D., was seen careering through the air. It mounted higher and higher, soared over an armed liner and a number of invasion-barges, and plopped into another dock.

In extreme agony of mind we waited for another explosion. Mercifully it never came. "Well," said the great man, "there's no question that *something* works. Most interesting," and he gave us an excellent report.

"It wouldn't never have happened," said Armstrong, "if the Captain had a-listened to me and the S.T., and hadn't a-stopped us a-doing what we was a-doing."

But at the moment Armstrong is still using Canister, B.O.D., for stowing his oil-tins. No one has ever told us what B.O.D. stands for.



"Well, well—I'd no idea London was as crowded as that!"

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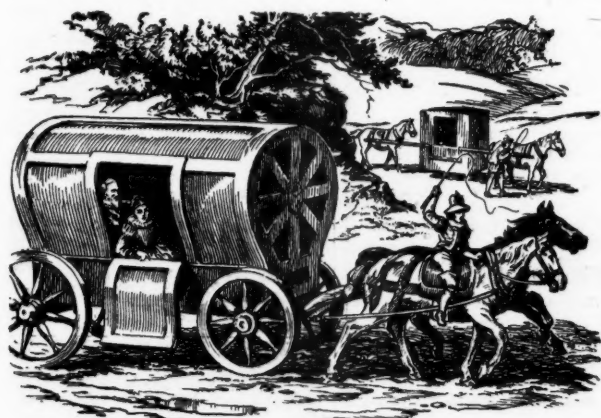
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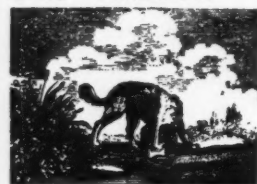
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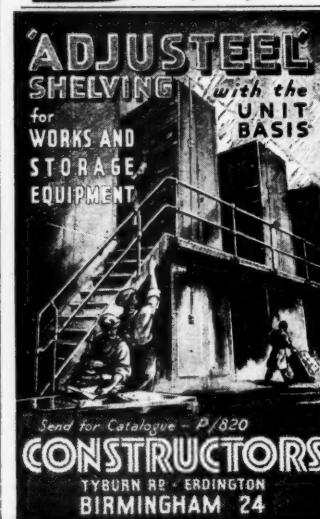
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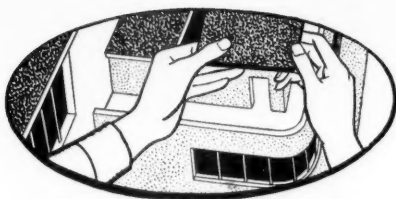
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[The original letter can be inspected.]

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